

Texas Federation of Women's Clubs

HANDBOOK

ON

**Social Centers**

Condensed from Articles by  
CHARLES W. HOLMAN in *Farm and Ranch*  
for 1910-1911

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*Education Committee:*

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The Education Committee is indebted to Colonel Frank P. Holland, president of the Texas Farm and Ranch Publishing Company, for this handbook on Social Centers.

We especially commend to the consideration of the club women of the Southwest the practical suggestions to be found in the latter half of the discussion, as to the organization of Social Centers in rural communities and in small towns.

The schoolhouse has been shown to be the logical social center. Equipped with library and gymnasium, and surrounded by garden and playgrounds, it will be an un-failing stimulus to social activity in any community.

MAGGIE W. BARRY,  
Chairman.

# Social Centers

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**W**HAT a family misses when it scatters, leaving the home bolted and shuttered, communities are wasting through disuse of their public centers of social life.

Just as the vacant house means useless walls and furnishings; just as the closed factory means unproductive capital; so an idle public building means wasted thousands of common tax money.

But more! When the family scatters, those precious abilities which association would have called forth, lie dormant. These workmen turned from the factory gate can no longer supplement each other in skilful production.

The unfocused community can never feel the enthusiasm of team spirit, the economy of cooperative effort, the richness of peculiar talent, possibilities for which exist among its isolated individuals.

Of all public buildings, the school house is the logical place for community meeting; and the movement to open this little-used public building outside of school hours for common benefit, already has much headway in many Southwestern communities.

To keep public equipment in public usefulness, to realize full social value from social property, to make the school house a community home and "sitting room," to add each community member's peculiar worth to the great family service—this may fairly be considered the Social Center movement.

This latest and perhaps longest step towards solving the problems of society—this "wider use of the school plant," (as comparison to the factory has molded the phrase), is of interest to everyone exactly in proportion as he or she would better local life and attract attention to that community as "a good place to live."

For clarity, this brief discussion is arranged under four chief heads:

1. What Happened in Rochester.
2. How the Social Center Idea Came to the Southwest.
3. Practical "Hows" for the Small Civic Center.
4. Focusing the Rural Community.

## What Happened in Rochester

FOR a number of years the various organizations for civic advancement in the city of Rochester had discussed the idea of getting their money's worth out of the public school buildings. It was felt that there was a social waste to keep closed, except for school hours, the very buildings which belonged to all the people.

These same organizations felt that in Rochester there was needed a spirit of friendly cooperation and a consciousness of joint interests. People were getting divided into cliques and classes and too segregated in sympathies. This situation was complicated by gangs of young fellows who congregated for mischief and gave citizens and police much trouble.

After some time it dawned upon certain educational leaders that the sluggish condition among the people came from their not knowing each other, and that the gangs of bad boys and young "toughs" had no place where they could gather to indulge in wholesome play and be led to study.

This condition was felt and appreciated by 50,000 progressive men and women and the demand for a something to meet conditions seemed to come spontaneously. Consequently, when in February, 1907, a committee, known as the school extension committee, representing the Central Trades and Labor council, the Children's Playground league, the College Women's club, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Humane society, the Labor lyceum, the Women's Local council, the Officers' Association of Women's clubs, the Political Equality club, the Social Settlement association, and the Women's Educational and Industrial union, about one-fourth of the population of Rochester was represented.

The delegates were authorized to act for the organizations. The Rochester Social Center booklet says of this meeting:

### Spontaneity the Keynote.

"It is significant of the spirit of the Social Centers that their beginning was not the result of the activity of any one person or group of persons. The Civic Extension committee, which did not go out of existence with the accomplishment of its prime object, but with the addition of delegates from several other organizations, has continued as the present Civic Betterment committee, was perhaps one of the most widely representative organizations ever yet brought together in Rochester for any public movement."

Here we have the keynote to the movement which caused the public school buildings of Rochester to be thrown open for the use of the people. The demand was "spontaneous." The committee did some very serious work and reported that, "It is the sentiment of this organization that the school board should have charge of the school extension work inclusive of the adjoining playgrounds."

Rochester's city council appropriated \$5000 for the beginning of the work. In early summer a supervisor was chosen. He visited Chicago and New York City and made investigations of the civic movement and social center work in other cities. A plan was then formulated to meet the needs of Rochester, to develop that spirit of spontaneity and community cooperation. Here again we have re-



course to the Rochester booklet:

"The Social Center was not to take the place of any existing institution; it was not to be a charitable medium for the service particularly of the poor; it was not to be a new kind of evening school; it was not to take the place of any church or other institution of moral uplift; it was not to serve simply as an 'Improvement association,' by which the people in one community should seek only the welfare of their district; it was not to be a 'Civic reform' organization, pledged to some change in city or state or national administration.

"It was just to be the restoration to its true place in social life of that most American of all institutions, the Public School Center, in order that through this extended use of the school building, might be developed, in the midst of our complex life, the community interest, the neighborly spirit, the democracy that we knew before we came to the city."

As to the purposes of the Social Center, for succinct statement, we again resort to the booklet:

"It was decided at that meeting that the Social Center should provide opportunities for physical activity by means of gymnasium equipment and direction, baths, etc.; opportunities for recreation, in addition to those which the gymnasium would offer, by the provision of various innocent table games; opportunities for intellectual activity by the provision of a library and reading room and by the giving of a lecture or entertainment at least once each week, while the essentially democratic, intimately social service of the centers should be gained through the opportunities offered for the organization of self-government clubs of men, of women, of boys and of girls.

"The use of the Social Centers for free, untrammelled discussion of public questions was carefully considered and the fact was cited that the School Extension committee had already gone over this matter and had passed a motion that 'the committee should insist upon the free use of the school buildings chosen, neighborhood meetings, even politics and religion not being tabooed.'"

With this idea the work began. Funds were inadequate to try the experiment with more than one school building. The building selected was located in a representative section of the city—where people were not very poor nor very rich, but composed of both wage workers and employers.

The first Social Center was opened Friday evening, November 1, 1907, with an attendance of 314. There was music by the volunteer orchestra, gotten together by the assistant director of the center, and



IN THE PINEY WOODS OF EAST TEXAS

Here a country school in the Elberta peach belt, by the aid of the school children, rural phones, etc., aroused a fine community spirit and secured a library as a Social Center Nucleus.

there were addresses by the president of the school board and others.

To give details of what was accomplished that first year would require too much space. Briefly, boys' and girls' clubs were organized, which drew from the streets the "gangs" that had troubled the citizens. The "gang" became a debating club. Interest in civic responsibility became active among the young people. Men's clubs were formed and held meetings regularly throughout the school year. Women's clubs formed and did much active work.



**SOME NORTH TEXAS BOYS AND GIRLS  
WHO WON AND OWN A SCHOOL  
LIBRARY**

A contest between two school grades secured this library in twenty-four hours, drew this small civic community into closer touch and set the boys and girls to reading because the books are their own achievement.

age nightly attendance was 162, while the lowest was 87.

Gymnasium classes among all ages were popular and well attended, while the library and reading rooms were filled every evening. The open meeting nights, when lectures were given, were well attended and, during the seven months that the Social Center was run, there was a total attendance of 25,022. The highest average

### **Social Centers "Made Good."**

In one year the Social Center "made good." The city council appropriated \$10,391 for continuance and extension of the work; for 1909 the appropriation was over \$20,000.

During the second year partial Social Centers were established, but, not counting them, at the three Social Centers the total attendance from November 1, to April 17, was 55,782.

Since the movement began in Rochester, a greater awakening has taken place in civic interest than had been dreamt possible. The people are closer to their officers, and there is open and public expression of approval or condemnation of the acts of the representatives of the people. The people of the city are getting acquainted with each other, and race prejudices are disappearing. At the Social Center everybody is just as good as anybody, and there are no class lines. The Social Center is remarkable for the reason that it makes everybody feel that there is a place where all the people are at home. The directors do not "guide" the people; they work with them.

Spontaneity is the principle that is causing this marked change in the people of Rochester. Governor Hughes of New York state said concerning it: "I am more interested in what you are doing, and what it stands for, than in anything else in the world. \* \* \* You are buttressing the foundations of democracy."



## How the Social Center Idea Came to the Southwest

WOMAN'S share in the original Rochester movement is testified by the roll call of associations represented in the first school extension committee. The history of the Southwestern movement is not different in this respect.

The social center idea for the Southwest was first voiced by Mrs. Maggie W. Barry, chairman of the education committee of the Texas Federation of Women's clubs, who, at the Denison meeting of that body, mentioned the good accomplished by the Rochester, N. Y., centers, and suggested that the clubs take up the idea in the Southwest. This suggestion was adopted, and the 1910 meeting in San Antonio devoted an important part of its program to discussing the feasibility of the idea.

Farm and Ranch and Holland's Magazine saw in this suggestion a new and catchy name for their old program of "Community Cooperation," and adopted it. Through the columns of Farm and Ranch discussion has been opened and has aroused considerable attention. These journals have pushed the movement by sending a lecturer to every teachers' institute that could be made in Texas last fall and this winter. The writer had the pleasure of explaining the idea to the Oklahoma State Federation of Women's clubs, and having them endorse and take up active agitation, also to the Texas club women at San Antonio.

In this way active agitation has made the name "Social Center" familiar in several states. It is resulting in prominent educators and community leaders readjusting their programs of community organization, and in the trying out of plans of work in some communities. The University of Texas has come to recognize the practicability of the social center idea, and is rendering invaluable assistance to the movement by its organized extension work. Recognition of this social center work was given the Southwest at the November convention of the National Municipal league, meeting at Buffalo, N. Y.

### Progress in the Southwest.

The Southwest sorely needs the social center in country life to blend the spirits of the people in harmony, to satisfy the social instinct, to stimulate the intellectual life and to inculcate true ideals of democratic government. The materials at hand with which to work are the women's federated clubs, the mothers' clubs, home and school clubs, parents' and teachers' clubs, farmers' institutes, boys' club clubs, the boys' and girls' clubs and the extension movements of the state universities and the agricultural and mechanical colleges. Invaluable in this connection is the agitation which the agricultural press of the Southwest is making.

The state of Oklahoma is doing a wonderful work in organizing its boys and girls and its farmers' institute work. Various civic improvement organizations of Texas have taken up the social center movement, and in 1910 practically every teachers' institute in Texas and every convention devoted time to discussion of the Social Center idea.

So great is the need for organization of country communities

that Farm and Ranch, the leading agricultural journal of the South, has actively agitated the need through its columns for the last 15 months and devotes all the time of one of its editors to the propaganda work. This journal has opened its columns to a free and full discussion and promulgation of plans; and every issue for the months of November, December and January contained communications from leading educators and from practical farmers. It has also made it possible for every community in the Southwest to obtain a library, and this opportunity to obtain well chosen books at a great economy has set hundreds of communities upon the Social Center road.

Opinion is unanimous that the school house is the natural place for the meeting of all the people, and agitation is active also to see that new school buildings shall be located with a view to more convenient access by both pupils and parents.

## Practical "Hows" for the Small Civic Center

**I**N the small farming town, where almost everyone is directly interested in agriculture, the social center will flourish; because it completes a vital deficiency. Such a town has a serious question to answer in "What shall we do for our boys and girls, to keep them off the streets, and actively engaged in something that will be for their own good, yet attract them?"

Two serious drawbacks to small town life are found in the attitude of the commercial club, and the women's clubs. The one desires to exploit its town to bring in industries; the other is too liable to waste energy and money on idealistic ventures of no practical benefit.

Let us take an average town—any small town almost anywhere—and analyze its capacities in this line.

The town is too small for good theatricals except, now and then, when a company having an unfilled engagement plays there. There are four churches, but none of them holds services every Sunday, so it occasionally happens there is a Sunday when not a church in the place has preaching. The women's clubs are devoted to a desultory study of the fine arts, not following a predetermined program arranged by expert program makers. At times a club gets a burst of civic enthusiasm and plants shade trees or beautifies the cemetery or installs a drinking fountain. Another may endeavor to stimulate the intellectual by bringing a few lyceum attractions during the winter months. Not being experienced, however, in the selection of proper talent, the leaders are often forced to pay excessive guaranties and find their enterprise a losing venture. There is no public library, not even a school library, the equipment of the school being usually limited to elementary laboratory apparatus.

The town may or may not have a commercial club "trying to get factories," spending money advertising for industrial enterprises rather than in developing the farming interest around the town by building better roads, improving streets, etc. To complicate matters, the two banks are not on good terms. Each is trying to corner all the patrons and to dominate the industrial future of the place. This



rivalry, in time, leads to imbitterment and a division among the people. Then along come the stern elders and put a stop to the amusements of the young people.

Why illustrate further? It is easy to see why the young men and women are leaving these communities and they are drying up. Lack of spontaneity is apparent. Need for a social magnet is felt.

#### Focusing the Social Activities.

It will be necessary for the commercial club to enroll the farmers of the open country; and for the townswomen to do the same



#### OXFORD SCHOOL NEAR VAN ALSTYNE, TEXAS.

Here public-spirited countrymen placed a library for school and community use  
From the beginning of the library effort, public spirit in this  
neighborhood has been quickened.

with their country sisters. If this is not always possible or practicable, the women's clubs and the commercial club can find means to draw the farm population to the town meetings.

Schoolboys can be enrolled in athletic classes by the volunteer work of young graduates, who went in for athletics at college. Young women, returned from college—to fold their hands at home and idle until they are married off—can find useful employment under this

plan, by becoming auxiliaries to the teaching force, and aids at the open meetings.

What might we hope to result if these organizations, instead of working independently, each almost unconscious of the work of the others, should be united, articulated and directed in their efforts toward some central aim, held together by some common social magnet?

Organizations in this town—rather these towns—might get together and decide upon some plan of interesting the whole population. Public spirited citizens could take upon themselves the work of committing and make provision for entertaining the people. In the spare room of the building a school library might be installed, and the people should have access to it. A reading room would be easy to provide and maintain. A small tax levy, or a popular subscription, could provide for equipment of gymnasium and payment for such services as would be necessary. Boys' clubs, girls' clubs, men's clubs and women's clubs could be organized to meet on certain nights or in afternoons. Domestic science meetings, sewing circles, civic improvement clubs, debating societies, amateur bands and orchestras could be organized.

On certain evenings, when the people meet for general entertainment, there might be addresses by the mayor, councilmen, county officials, the health officer, some physician or some other citizen interested in and an authority on some phase of municipal community progress. On these evenings the people from the rural districts could be invited and a simple entertainment in the way of refreshments served. At these gatherings the right of free speech should be considered sacred. It must be everybody's meeting. A chairman for each meeting should be elected every evening. The reason for coming together should be the common good, and such a reason will soon generate warmer community spirit and higher ideals of civic righteousness.

It might be that the library and reading room will draw many who otherwise would never come out to public meetings. It is certain that the recreational features would have the effect of taking the boys off the streets—a condition almost deplorable in many small towns.

## Focusing the Rural Community

**S**UMMARIZED, we find the present-day environment of the farmers in the Southwest contain these serious handicaps:

1. The majority of the Southwest's rural population supports by taxation a double system of free schools—white and negro—and this burden is borne, in major part, by the whites. There are too many one-teacher schools. School houses are unfortunately located, poorly equipped and supported. Teachers are underpaid and overworked. Local tradition and prejudice is a serious handicap to the teacher who would make radical changes in study courses to fit the needs of her pupils or in accordance with advancing pedagogical beliefs.

2. Nearly every rural community attempts to support more churches than can be sustained by such small congregations. Pastors are too often either young men who regard country charges as step-



ping stones to city pastorates, or old men whose ministerial days are in decline.

3. Farmers' organizations lack virility. Their membership is limited to a very small percentage of actual farmers.

4. In many sections renters are supplanting the sturdier types of land owners. These renters are, necessarily, of a lower economic order and cannot give ready response to popular movements, or enable their children to obtain the essentials of general and technical training so necessary to the success of the new generation of farmers.

5. Farm families are geographically isolated, and bad wagon roads make communication at times difficult. There is a general negligence about sanitation for prevention of diseases and purity of water supply. Beautifying home and school grounds and public roads is not given proper attention. And there is often a plentiful lack of good literature within the home.

### **Social Apathy a Logical Result.**

Our imperfect school system has not yet eliminated from the Southwest the illiterate element; neither has it met the cultural or technical needs of country boys and girls. Instruction in the small country school is often a mere matter of memory lessons. Bad locations of school buildings have made it hard for farmers to get together in the community school houses.

Small memberships of denominational congregations result in sickly individual churches with slight influence. Strict adherence to dogmatic, denominational interpretations of the scriptures, at times, reaches an intensity of feeling and height of pitch that divides communities into embittered sects, pulling cross-wise with each other, instead of uniting forces on the common ground of social service for the spiritual good.

In the matter of his organizations, the farmer's weakness engenders in him a failure to appreciate the mutual dependence of all who work on the farm; and renders the one most important class in America almost impotent and at the mercy of those who set the prices on the world's goods. This means economic debility.

As renters increase in a community, enthusiasm is likely to decline; and initiative in personal or public endeavor "loses the name of action."

Isolation, accentuated by bad roads, and so forth, has these good and bad results: Farmers tend to become both extremely radical and absurdly conservative, the two predispositions being often paradoxically present in the same character. The farmer's point of view tends to become limited to his vocation and the world represented by his neighborhood. But this very isolation develops a rugged independence, a sturdy self-reliance and a type of men and women who think deeply and weigh well all questions within their range.

### **Cooperative Democracy is Needed.**

Such causes and results as recited above permit us to draw together under one general head the social needs of the Southwest:

**We must evolve a cooperative democracy with the social supplanting the individualistic spirit.**

To do this, we will generate enthusiasm and develop leadership in the country. Our progress will be the advance of a class alive to



its needs and consciously doing the things necessary for its evolution. We require a vital stimulant and dependable leaders.

We have referred to the intense individualistic spirit of the countryman. Under pioneer conditions that spirit was natural and normal. The tiller of the soil was the nearest approach to the man who was sufficient unto himself. But with settlement in an advanced stage, with small farms, with practically all available lands yielding to the husbandman, with agriculture manifesting a constant tendency toward specialized effort, it becomes more and more necessary for the farmer to lay aside his early attitude and work in harness for the social good.

Such a spirit as was to be praised in 1800 is abnormal and out of harmony in 1910. Yet, is it hard to find countrymen, working with the tools of modern civilization, living in the thoughts of a time that has gone? Can these men readjust their relation to organized society; can they interpret this readjustment to mean that the highest form of individualism finds its completest expression in social service?

### Conscious Forces at Work.

Forces are consciously at work transforming the present agricultural class. As an indication, in Texas, a campaign is being prosecuted for creation of a special county board of education, to relieve the already over-burdened commissioners' court; and for establishment of country high schools, in order to give boys and girls higher educational advantages right at their own doors.

Another educational effort is to change the Texas law so that we may keep and draw into the office of county superintendent truly high class talent for upbuilding the county school system. Texas law limits salary and office expenses of county superintendents to so low a figure that, when a good man's real usefulness to his county begins to be felt, his energy and enterprise attract flattering offers from some branch of city education or some higher educational institution, and he leaves the work he has begun for one offering greater remuneration. At present time there is need of more strong men in county superintendents' offices than in any other division of the Texas school system.

In religious circles the inability of the rural church to fulfill its obvious mission—to cope with the needs of the people from its purely religious position—is the subject of devoted discussion. Authorities are coming to realize that young men must be specially fitted for rural charges.

These young men should be organizers and leaders and must enter the work to remain for life in the rural districts. They should be leaders in ways other than the part of spiritual advisors. They should preach the cardinal truths of the Christian religion, avoid expressions as to creeds, and work to arouse an ethical sentiment for social service.

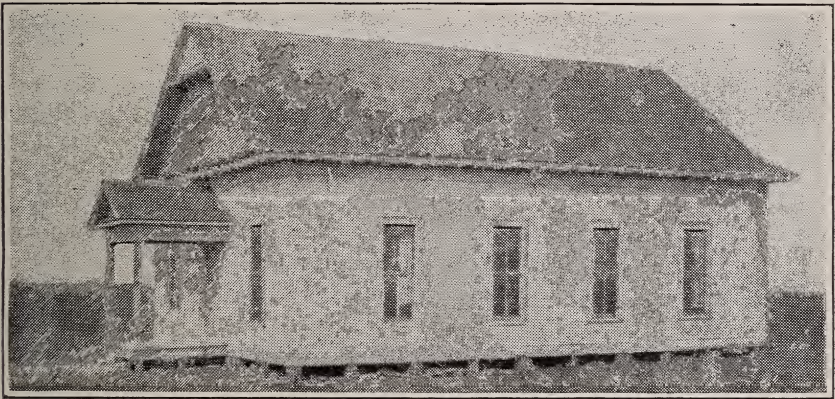
While farmers' organizations are not always of long life, and usually have quickly alternating high and low tides of strength and influence, the never-ceasing attempts of the class at cooperative efforts foretell a day when some giant movement will sweep the country and enable the farmer to voice a determining word concerning the prices of farm commodities. Another important point to notice is, that almost every strong farmers' organization admits women to

full membership privileges, and entitles them to hold office. In this field much remains to be done. A rich harvest awaits the workers.

We are modifying isolation by permanent wagon roads, rural telephones, free mail delivery, trolley cars and automobiles. We will lessen its evils by the monorail and aeroplane. Active agencies for diminishing the effect of distance have already accomplished marvels. The next ten years shall witness miracles. But, for the farm class to fulfill its mission, country people must federate the social forces already at work.

#### Material For Use.

The initial requirement will be leadership. It will take a man and a woman. Two are enough to start work. Their qualities of leadership must consist of broad ideals, untiring energy, patience,



#### A FORE-PLANNED SOCIAL CENTER

Built by an extensive land owner, as a definite center of social life in his community and among his tenants. Since the opening celebration in December, 1910, this chapel is making a record for service as a church, school and club house many hours every week. A library has been installed and at the regular Friday night meetings, an average of one hundred-fifty neighbors listen to and participate in regular programs.

tact, limiting their guidance only to the point where people think for themselves, yet ever keeping the people alive to this point. It will require constant endeavor, and they must be "always on the job." The two can work wonders with any isolated community.

If the community is split by sect, party or family disputes, the task will be harder than if mere apathy prevails. If the people are conscious of their social need, and are ready to act with competent leaders, the task will be easy. Organization is not troublesome, enthusiasm is not so hard to generate; but keeping lighted the fires of social progress is difficult and worrisome.

#### Need of a Social Magnet.

To do this, the leaders must find a social magnet—a something that will center and hold the interest of the people upon the country school. This something must be material and form the nucleus for the social center institution.



The almost unanimous opinion of workers is that the community library, placed in the country school fulfills this need. It will attract until it takes its rightful place among the other institutions which will compose the social center.

This man and this woman will find as their valuable aids, the secretary of the business men's organization in the town to which they are tributary, the local minister, the school teacher (if the leaders do not happen to be either minister or teacher), the county superintendent, the government demonstration agent, and always a few enterprising men and women who appreciate the motive and the great results bound to accrue.

### **Awakening a Neighborhood.**

If the school building is antiquated, the best way to bring the tax payers' attention to this fact is by starting a campaign for a school library. This focuses attention upon the school.

Once the library is installed, public interest can be aroused by schoolhouse meetings for the discussion of a special bond issue to build a new and suitable structure to house children and books. A little diplomacy will quell the opposition of those who oppose a new school building. Enthusiasm started among the children will soon reach the necessary fever heat to pass the proposition through the ballot box. Care, now, should be taken to make the school building not only modern, but one that can be utilized by a community of much larger growth. If possible, a separate room should be fitted out for library and reading room.

### **Federating Organizations.**

With an attractive school building, and a helpful library, federation of organizations becomes a much simpler proposition. The school will be the natural meeting place for the branch of the Farmers' Union, the Boys' Corn Club, and the Friday Night "Literary."

It is logical and natural for the teacher and the government agent to organize a school and home garden association among the boys and girls. The fundamental idea of this association will be to make outside surroundings of country life as attractive as possible. Beautifying of home and school grounds will result in beautifying of home and school thoughts.

The woman leader will now organize cooking and sewing societies, and a mothers' club. The man leader will organize a better roads' and buildings' club among the men. These interests will unite in parent-teacher and in home and school clubs. We have presented here every needed factor to awaken this community. The next step is coordinating these organizations for civic betterment.

A schedule can be so arranged that the school building will be in use five nights out of the week by separate organizations, and one night out of the week by everybody in the neighborhood. Plans for bringing these associations into harmony with each other, and quickening the life of the people are unlimited. For instance, the girls' clubs could entertain the boys' corn clubs. The home and school garden association could give an open program, and its members could there tell their parents how to make homes more attractive for children. The Farmers' Union could hold its open meetings in such a manner as to get the non-members interested in the work the union is trying to accomplish.

For discussion at every public meeting, should be themes interest-



ing to the local community. Holders of public offices should be invited to give their answers to questions affecting the public welfare; and these representatives should be grilled as to their positions on issues wherein they voted contrary to the will of their constituents. True democracy and independent, positive thought should be encouraged. The Social Center is to be everybody's meeting place and everybody's forum.

Speakers can always be secured for the asking; and the secretary of the business men in the next town will gladly send out authorities on farm subjects to address the enterprising community. In such a community these speakers will find eager, willing auditors, earnest, intelligent men and women, who will fill the house to the doors. But these same listeners will follow the speaker with thoughtful discussion of his theme, and he will probably find himself in the witness chair before the end of the evening. Who can doubt that this kind of a community organization would benefit?

### What Has Been Done.

Fifteen miles from the railroad in Western Michigan is the little town of Hesperia, which first started the patron-teacher club movement. This community has rejuvenated itself and for 20 years has been improving itself by a form of social center work. In fact, the "Hesperia movement" is, perhaps, the first organized and best known effort in rural community uplift. The success of the Hesperia movement warrants our firm belief in social centers for the Southwest. Farmersville, Plano, Celeste, Troupe and other small towns of Texas have started phases of this work. A number of isolated communities have consciously begun work on definite lines of advancement; but for the Southwest as a whole, we can only say that these efforts are yet too weak to make themselves felt.

### Library Associations, First Hope.

Knowledge of conditions leads the writer to believe that the library idea is the one which will bring most prompt response from the people. This is undoubtedly as great a need as any other. Meeting it will arouse the people to appreciation of the value of cooperation. Through the efforts of Farm and Ranch the past three months, 100 communities have adopted the library plan. The sentiment is growing. Especially, does the library plan appeal to the isolated community. It is necessary to agitate for more libraries in the Southwest, as a first means of creating social centers.

The writer wishes again to say, that the social forces at work in country life will make the farmer of the future a very different being from the farmer of today. He further predicts a spread of the social center wave, and its adoption over the whole of this section; perhaps not in name, but certainly with the same idea. From that getting together of the people will result:

1. A growing spirit of fraternalism.
2. A quickened interest in public welfare.
3. A saner, better-balanced manhood and womanhood, inspired by truly democratic ideals.
4. Ultimate solution of the difficult question of holding farm population on the farms, by making country life so attractive that its possibilities will satisfy the normal instincts of the ambitious man and woman.



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(Explanation—Reference is made here to number of issue and page, as 3-13 would refer to issue number 3, page 13.)

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Note—Names of publishers and details, also reference to the rapidly accumulating matter on Social Centers may be had by writing the Social Center Dept. of FARM AND RANCH, Dallas, Texas.